



Aruba and the Quota Club get “pro-active” on the issue of teenage pregnancy

On Thursday evening, November 9, the EPB School in San Nicolas was a beehive of activity as the “Uni Pa Preveni” exposition was open to the public. Organized by the Quota Club of Aruba, various organizations took part in an informative evening warning of the pitfalls of teenage pregnancy, a growing concern for all communities.

Colorful and entertaining presentations captured the attention of the youth, and hundreds of teenagers, both male and female attended with their parents, seeking information. Representatives from Asunto Social, Voogdijraad, Dienst Besmetelijke Ziekte, F.A.D.A./Pride, Sala di parto, the Horacio Oduber Hospital, Fundacion Respetami, Youth Hotline, Cas di Parter, Family Planning, the White-Yellow Cross, and the Women’s Club of Aruba took part. Each had a booth dedicated to all aspects of teenage pregnancy, not only preventing it, but also dealing with it when it occurs. The various organizations presented not only the facts and figures of how it can cause the deterioration of a community, but also let the youth know that there is moral support, such as the Youth Hotline, to turn to if they are caught in an untenable situation. The Directie Voogdijraad provided information about the legal issues faced by teenage mothers, such as custodial rights and obligations. There was not any aspect of what teenagers face today in dealing with their developing sexuality and its possible consequences that was not addressed.

Various presentations, such as on the dangers of abortion, held the attention of the gathering. One of the most impressive moments of the evening was an address by Jennifer Geerman, only fifteen years old, and a volunteer with Family Planning. Jennifer devotes a great deal of her time talking to her fellow teenagers about the dangers of unplanned and unprotected sex, and states “I see many things happening amongst my friends and peers, and we (at Family Planning) find that if we kids talk to other kids, they get the message much better.”

Aruba’s social agencies admit to seeing a rise in teenage pregnancies, and feel that it is a problem that must be confronted and corrected immediately, and the best solution is always prevention. This requires education and information, and from the response to the exposition, young people are concerned and want to know how to deal with it. They left with stacks of information in Dutch, English and Papiamentu, and hopefully will read and use what they learned that night.